



ReVision

re (ri) *n.* 1. anew, again vision (vɪzʰən) *n.* 1. the manner in which one sees or conceives of something

Stars Shining in the Heart of Dixie

YES Institute went to Montgomery, Alabama, to train 40 educators, religious leaders, parents, and healthcare professionals in our signature communication model. The groundbreaking two-day course set into motion critical conversations about keeping all Alabama students safe.



Martha Fugate, Founding Director of YES Institute, leading Communication Solutions™ in Montgomery, AL.

Rhonda Thomason, Grants Administrator for Teaching Tolerance at the Southern Poverty Law Center, coordinated this historic training. She heard about the results we produced in North Georgia, and sought our support in opening dialogue on gender and orientation in Alabama. Participants came from all over the state, including Dr. Glenda Elliott, Chairperson for Alabama Safe Schools Coalition; Danny Upton, Executive Director of Equality Alabama; Dr. Letha Maxton, Director of Student Services for Montgomery Public Schools; Kamela Kennedy,

friends.” Another shared, “In the African-American community, this is a ‘hot’ topic. I have always frozen when people spoke about gay or lesbian issues in a negative, discriminating, or hateful way. This course showed me the power I have to make a difference.” Numerous accounts of bullying and violence underscored the importance of speaking openly about gender and orientation. A parent revealed the torment

“Transformative! The evolution that occurred among our group was remarkable. I feel hopeful jubilation as we move forward from here.”

-Rhonda Thomason, Grants Administrator, Teaching Tolerance



Course participants engaged in discussion.

Assistant Coordinator of Student Activities at Alabama State University; and Dr. Paul Hard, Assistant Professor of Counseling from Auburn University at Montgomery.

Just speaking the words “gay” and “transgender” requires tremendous courage in Alabama. One participant stated, “I have been struggling with how to discuss these issues in my church. So far I’ve been too afraid. Now I feel free to open dialogue in my community and among my

Drs. Casey White, Joe Fantone, and Charisse Gencyuz from the University of Michigan Medical School came to YES to see firsthand the unique education available in YES courses. They are committed to transforming standards of



Civil Rights leader Rev. Robert Graetz with Rhonda Thomason, Grants Administrator for Teaching Tolerance in Montgomery, AL.

“ I find this course invaluable. There IS a way to bridge gaps among people with differing opinions! This will foster the goal of keeping young people safe. ”

-Rev. Evan Garner, Episcopal priest

her son endured daily in school with taunts of “faggot” and “homo.” Classmates once assaulted him by tying him to a flag pole; they eventually escalated to using death threats.

“This course demonstrated how a group of strangers—even when they have strongly opposing viewpoints—can quickly become as one with a common purpose. Since taking the course, I don’t feel the need to argue with people who disagree with me. Instead, I can focus on the other person, and what we can contribute to each other.”

- Prof. Charles Beverly, Troy University, AL

See **Alabama**, page 2

A First for Medical Education

Fifty people from six different states came to YES Institute’s Summer Education Week to learn our unique education models. Participants included corporate executives, medical school deans, healthcare professionals, and middle school administrators, all pioneering exciting initiatives in their communities.



Drs. Casey White, Joe Fantone, and Charisse Gencyuz from University of Michigan Medical School with YES Executive Director Rachel Sottile (second from right).

medical care. In collaboration with YES Institute, they are designing a comprehensive program on communication, gender, and orientation to integrate across the four-year medical curriculum at University of Michigan. Graduates will be

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These programs are made possible by your generosity. To participate in keeping all youth safe, visit www.yesinstitute.org and learn more.

Receiving two ReVision newsletters?
Please contact: tim@yesinstitute.org

equipped with cutting-edge knowledge and skills to provide quality care to patients. This innovative program will set the standard for medical education in our nation.

More Firsts

Faculty from Ethical Culture Fieldston School in New York, led by Principal Luis Ottley, returned to YES Institute. Hugo Mahabir, Dean of Faculty, commented, "I have an expanded and deeper sense of the power of communication to bring people together, break down barriers, and create stronger community. I learned ways to make the difference I want to make, and build a foundation for inclusiveness and belonging. This is truly revolutionary work." YES' partnership with Fieldston continues to flourish, and open opportunities to expand our work.



Education Week participants in Communication Solutions™.

“YES completely revolutionized my views on gender! I see the critical importance of using language that is inclusive, and that challenges binary notions.”

-Dr. Charisse Gencyuz, University of Michigan Medical School



Chris Crespo, Inclusiveness Strategy Leader, Ernst & Young; Rachel Soffile, Executive Director, YES Institute; and Elizabeth Eubanks, LCSW, Charles George VA Medical Center in Asheville, NC.

Corporate leaders from Ernst & Young LLP, one of the "Big Four" accounting firms, came to YES Institute driven by the goal of global workplace inclusiveness. Victor Nieves commented, "I often work in teams of very diverse individuals with differing opinions. The insights I gained about gender stereotypes, and the skills I learned to resolve conflicts will impact every aspect of my professional life."

"The work I do requires me to make someone else wrong and my client right; my faith upbringing taught me similarly. There is comfort in adhering to a strict set of rules and standards. However, after participating in the courses at YES, I find myself looking to make sure communication is healthy and productive for all involved, which has made an infinite amount of love available to me and through me. The incredible variety in people is a gift. Adventure and opportunity, rather than labels and fear, now guide my interactions."

- Garry Bevel, Esq., Guardian ad Litem

Elizabeth Eubanks, a social worker for military veterans in Western North Carolina, expressed the urgent need for education: "Kids returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are at high risk for suicide—



Rachel Soffile (bottom center) with Family Resource Center staff.

overwhelmed by pressures to fit a certain image. Assumptions made about gender and orientation reinforce the message that they can't just be themselves."

“Gender and orientation are universal. Getting rid of labels will help us all, and can lead to unprecedented results on a global level.”

- Chris Crespo, Inclusiveness Strategy Leader, Ernst & Young

Staff from Family Resource Center (FRC) and the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Program in Miami echoed the difference education makes. A case manager from FRC said, "Many foster care youth want to go through a gender transition. Before this weekend I had no idea how to be supportive. I'm so relieved! Now I know I won't just be one more person these kids can't trust."

Life or Death in Dade Schools



Miami-Dade teachers and counselors at YES Institute.

Students who struggle with gender identity face a day-to-day reality that is very difficult, and often life-threatening. Thirty-two percent of youth labeled as "transgender" attempt suicide, and 60% are attacked in violent assaults. Last month, 100 Miami-Dade County Public School teachers and counselors met at YES Institute, and spoke of the increasing visibility of gender transitions.

Luke Jude, Communication Director at YES Institute, told them about a student who tried to take his own life just two days earlier: "He'd been telling his teachers and parents he wasn't a girl and wanted to be called by a new name. When I spoke to him in the hospital, he said, 'I

tried to be who people wanted to see, but I couldn't do it anymore.'" When we asked the teachers how many have students struggling with gender concerns, half the hands in the room went up. One middle school counselor stated, "One of my students is afraid to use the restroom at school."

Please contact YES Institute at 305-663-7195 for support in successfully adapting to challenges posed by gender transitions. Our **Gender Resource Guide** is available at www.yesinstitute.org/gender

Our initial training in Montgomery sparked the formation of a local coalition committed to meeting regularly to continue advancing this work. In November, we are providing a course on gender and orientation via videoconference to strengthen the work of the Alabama leadership.

"I feel free from having to prove myself right on every aspect of an issue. Now I can genuinely listen, which is the access to making a difference. That's much more important than looking smart! I've been using the skills I learned to facilitate discussions with friends and develop dialogue among groups. In fact, I wrote my first letter to the editor today in which I recommended opening dialogue within schools to deal with suicide among youth labeled as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. Thanks for the new set of tools!"

- Ed Wilson, PFLAG Dad

Kiaora Society Membership

The Rt. Rev. Francisco José Duque-Gomez, the presiding Bishop of Colombia, recently invited YES Institute to conduct Communication Solutions™ for all Episcopal priests in Colombia. We will fulfill this request in the spring of 2009 thanks to Rev. Marta Weeks and Lee Osiason, whose generous donations are allowing us to follow through on this groundbreaking opportunity. This initiative will open an unprecedented dialogue on gender and orientation in South America, set in motion by religious leaders. We are excited about this opportunity, and honored to have such generous partners in our work.

We are grateful to longtime supporters Ed McAmis & Gerson Gonzalez for their generosity and enduring partnership. Their increased

contribution as Kiaora Visionaries in support of Rachel Sottile, our new Executive Director, exemplifies their commitment to YES Institute.

We thank José Luis Peré for renewing his contribution at the Leader Level. Renewing their membership as Mentors are dear friends Enrique Carillo, Dennis Edwards & Mark Steinberg, Douglas Kinsley & Gabriel Pou, Gordon Rhodes, Richard Shannon, Tim Wagoner, and Patricia & Milton Wallace. We welcome and thank Olga & Ignacio del Valle, Eva Leivas-Andino, Mike Syers, and Mel Wymore as new Kiaora Mentors. We also thank the Dade Community Foundation and Ruth Anderson Foundation for their continuing support. For information about joining our Kiaora Society, please contact Eva at 305-663-7195 or 786-301-3940.



Kiaora Society

Kiaora Society members donate \$1,000 or more to YES Institute annually.

Philanthropist \$150,000 or more

Jonathan Lewis

Luminary \$25,000 or more

Adrienne Arshst
Rev. Marta S. Weeks

Visionary \$10,000 or more

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Hon. Katy Sorenson, County Commissioner

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Russell Wagner
Tim Wagoner
Patricia & Milton Wallace
Laura White
Patricia Woodson
Mel Wymore
Bob & Susan Zarchen
Joseph M. Zolobczuk

Welcome Back, Eva!



Eva Leivas-Andino, famed mom and exuberant champion of our Hispanic outreach, recently returned to YES Institute as Director of Finance & Development.

We are thrilled to have Eva back! She has resumed her role as Kiaora Society liaison, and has already inspired new partnerships that are giving our work an international reach.

“ I am so happy to be back home at YES Institute! I have new knowledge and energy, and am more committed than ever to contributing my love and passion to our work. I will be calling you to engage you in the most exciting opportunity to change the world for our children. ”

-Eva Leivas-Andino

Featured Exemplar Video

ex-em-plar (*noun*) [ĭg-zĕm'plār]

1. one that serves as a model or as an example. 2. an ideal.

Tony Valido works to ensure that teachers and counselors in Miami-Dade County Public Schools have the latest knowledge on gender and orientation.

See the video now:

www.yesinstitute.org/video

Tony Valido, Edu. Specialist



Become a YES Course Leader!

We are excited to announce our new **Apprentice Program (AP)**, specially designed to train powerful leaders to meet the rising demand for our education.



Loren Pulitzer, a member of the AP Program.

“ This training is already making a huge difference in my life. I'm learning what stops me in communication, and how to be an effective leader. ”

-Loren Pulitzer, AP participant

Eight people who have completed the YES curriculum have declared their commitment to being Certified YES Institute Course Leaders.

If you would like to join our next all-star Apprentice Team, call Joseph or Luke at 305-663-7195.

Foundations & Corporations

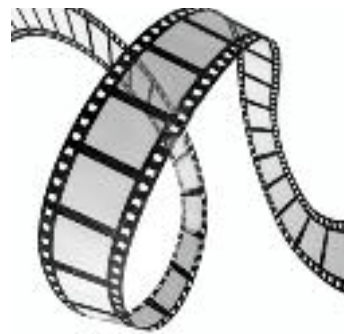
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5275 Sunset Drive
Miami, FL 33143
www.yesinstitute.org

Making History in Montgomery, Alabama



Movie Nights Lights, Camera, Action!

Come join us at YES
Movie Night for great
entertainment and
education with style! Each month YES Institute hosts
a free film presentation for community members,
followed by open discussion of key themes around
gender and orientation.

Next up is *Me As He* on Wednesday, December 17,
from 6 - 9 PM. Local filmmaker Christina
DerHagopian will be with us for discussion following
the movie. Bring your popcorn and friends!

RSVP: 305-663-7195 or luke@yesinstitute.org

Winter Education Weekend

January 16 - 20, 2009

Five days of training that will alter your ability to
make a difference on the topics of gender and
orientation. Reserve your space today!

Register: 305-663-7195 or joseph@yesinstitute.org

Save the Date

"All Out Recognition"

Saturday, January 10
3:00 - 5:00 PM

Join us for dessert and champagne to honor YES
Institute speakers and volunteers. Reception will be
held at Fellowship Hall in Riviera Church.

RSVP: 305-663-7195 or joseph@yesinstitute.org



305-663-7195
www.yesinstitute.org

Vision

A community in which all youth develop as
healthy individuals free of suicide, violence,
and discrimination.

Mission

To prevent suicide and ensure the healthy
development of gay, lesbian, bisexual,
transgender, and all youth by initiating
dialogue, providing education, and
creating support systems.

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Statistics

Boys are first called "faggot" in elementary
school, long before orientation is known.
Gender is at the core of most harassment.

Gay Youth:

- 33% of all teen suicides
- 50% rejected by their parents

Heterosexual Youth:

- 80% of youth harassed "as gay" actually
identify as heterosexual

Impact of Gender Ideals:

- 57% of girls list "appearance" as the
biggest concern of their lives
- 25% of boys diet; 33% vigorously exercise

Education Partnerships

Ethical Culture Fieldston School, NY
North Georgia College & State University
Rainbow Center, Atlanta, GA
Episcopal Diocese of Southeast Florida
Teaching Tolerance-Southern Poverty Law Ctr, AL
TransYouth Family Allies, AZ
The Alliance for GLBTQ Youth, FL

Accreditations



Professional Development
MDCPS Master Plan Points.
Search instructor "Valido."

Component Numbers #2-403-003 #2-406-302



Mental Health: SW, MF, MH
Nursing: LPN, RN, ARNP, MW
Psychology: PY, PPY, LPY, SS
Nutrition: NC, RD

Florida Board of LMHC, LMFT, LCSW BAP #50-1652

In the Justice System



JAC staff in a YES Institute training.

YES Institute led a series of trainings at the Juvenile
Assessment Center (JAC) for case managers and
staff, who serve youth arrested in Miami-Dade
County.

**"We get gay and transgender kids in
here all the time. This is the first time I
learned about any resources in the
community to support them."**

- Case manager, JAC

The JAC leadership invited us back to reach all
120 staff members in additional trainings.

**"I am not as open-minded as I
thought I was. I definitely want more
information so I can be sensitive to
youth who enter the system."**

- Case manager, JAC